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THE DECORATOR AND FURNISHER.



SOMETHING ABOUT GOLD LEAF.

OLD leaf was used in the most ancient times of which we have a record. The Egyptians, as we know, ornamented with it their furniture and sarcophagi, on which the gold is still to be seen. Their gold was beaten out between the cocum or membrane of the intestines of an ox, whilst the Greeks and Romans employed parchment. The Roman poets make occasional allusion to gilding, one comparing it to the brilliant gloss of a spider's web illumined by the sun, another adopting the word as a syno-

nyme of the luminous vapors seen about the setting sun. In all succeeding times the practice of beating out the leaf between parchment has never been departed from, and no device has been invented to supersede hand manipulation in bringing the leaf to a high degree. From 150,000 to 200,000 leaves make an inch in thickness. Even the rays of the sun will pass through such leaves. The tints of gold leaf vary from deep orange red down to a pale silvery hue. Pale leaf gold is an alloy of silver and gold; deep hues are usually intermixed with a slight amount of copper. Dutch gold is copper leaf colored yellow by the fumes of molten zinc. Various solutions are also used to alter the tint of gold leaf when laid. The best gold leaf is prepared from gold containing one and a quarter per cent alloy of copper.

Gold with its alloys is first cast in ingots, then rolled into sheets, which are cut into squares and subjected to the hammering process on the anvil. First the plates are extended to the size of the packs, four inches square, are again cut in four pieces and again hammered. A third hammering is given to the pieces when they have reached the size of the pack and been subdivided. The 150 pieces with which the hammering commenced are now increased to 2,400 pieces. The process of hammering is long and tedious, and requires the nicest determination of the force and direction of the blows. The anvil itself is convex at top; so also is the hammer. When the sheets of metal have attained a certain thinness they are placed between the prepared skin. The beater never strikes consecutively in the same place. A sense of feeling as well as observation is required to ascertain when the metal is sufficiently thin. During the subsequent separation and sorting of the leaves all draught has to be carefully guarded against.

DULLNESS in gilding may simply arise from the accumulation of dust. The minute particles of which this dust is composed will be wholly removed, and a bright and fresh appearance given to the gilding by a coat of damp fuller's earth, and on this drying, by a coating of oxgall with a sponge.

THERE is a large amount of stencil work in monochrome done on walls and ceilings, which both in respect to design and coloring is very pretty, and is spoken of as fresco work, but it cannot be properly termed such, lacking the shade, relief and freedom of true frescoing.

THE variety in cane seat chairs is almost endless. There are mahogany, oak, cherry and walnut frames, those with plain and carved arms, and many styles of the very solid and practical bent wood and twisted sorts. Some of the fanciful designs are very quaint and graceful.

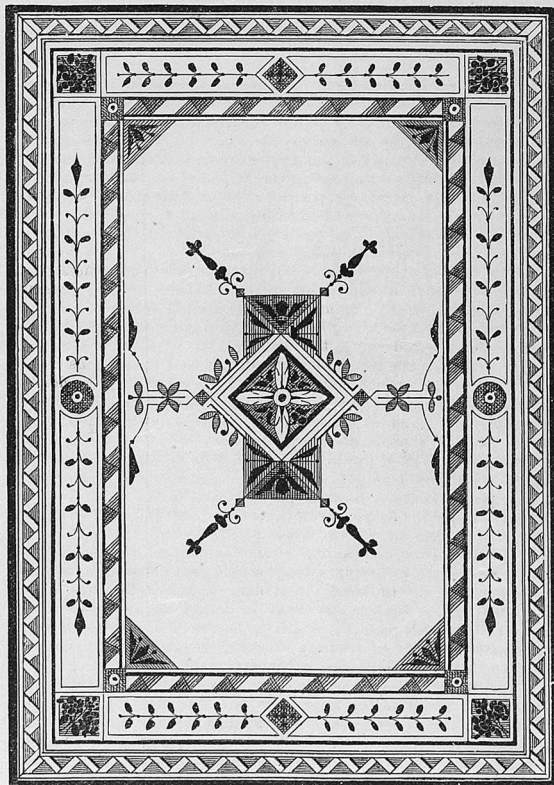
FURNITURE CREAMS.

By J. CARRUTHERS.

FURNITURE creams is the term applied to polished furniture woods. The drawback to polishing is that on being exposed to extreme heat the materials used in producing a polish are apt to become disintegrated. Thus a hot plate placed on a polished mahogany table is apt to make a dulling impression. Polishing is to be commended for its sightliness and bringing out the grain and full beauty of the tones, shades and figures of furniture hardwoods. These woods are mahogany, rosewood, satinwood, walnut, maple, black ebony, ash and amboyna. The process consists in providing a solid, compact ground to the final coating or polish, which consists of a solution of lac, sanderach and spirits of wine in equal parts by weight. It is to the fact that the pores of the wood are thoroughly filled up that the highest degree of polish is possible. This priming or filling of the wood is obtained either with linseed oil containing a small amount of varnish, or with Russian fat or common lard mixed with plaster of Paris, or with plaster of Paris and water brought to the consistence of a paste, a slight amount of pigment being usually added to each of these.

The filler is forced into the pores by the action of a rubber, and the superfluous matter is wiped off. When dry it is gone over with a glass paper to remove any inequalities occasioned by the swelling of the wood. Next oil is flowed over the surface by means of a ball of cotton wool saturated in the same, and covered with calico, should the surface not be flat, otherwise with a cork rubber. On this drying the surface is papered down with glass paper No. 14. The polish is laid on with the same description of rubber, the operator working in circles, and applying different rubbers, each one exuding less oil than the former, till finally a mere drop on the outside of the rubber suffices, when a full, clear and hard finish is obtained.

Hard rubbing, generating heat, is necessary to secure the alliance between the spirit and oil, which are naturally antagonistic, the pressure varying, however, at different stages. The adhesive nature of the polish and the vacuums created cause the rubber slightly to bite. In the end the friction and the air cause the spirit wholly to evaporate. The surface when dry is sometimes given a touch of clear spirit applied with a piece of calico.



DESIGN FOR CEILING.